RED-LINED VERSION OF THE CLAIMS SHOWING THE CLAIM AMENDMENTS

7. (Twice Amended) A method for screening a patient for cancer or precancer, the method comprising the step of:

detecting in a patient tissue or body fluid sample comprising exfoliated cells a [nucleic acid] fragment of a nucleic acid that is present in both normal and cancerous or precancerous cells, wherein said fragment is of a length that is greater than a length of said [a] nucleic acid expected to be present in a [said] sample from [in] a healthy patient;

the presence of the fragment being a positive screen for cancer or precancer.

8. (Amended) A method for screening a patient for cancer or precancer, the method comprising the steps of:

determining in a patient tissue or body fluid sample comprising exfoliated cells or cellular debris whether an amount of a DNA fragment [nucleic acid] greater than 200 base pairs in length exceeds a predetermined amount, wherein said DNA fragment is a degradation product of DNA that is present in both normal and cancerous or precancerous cells; and,

identifying a positive screen for cancer or precancer if said amount does exceed the predetermined amount.

10. (New) The method of claim 7, wherein the detecting step comprises conducting an amplification reaction designed to amplify only nucleic acid fragments that are greater than 200 base pairs in length.

11. (New) The method of claim 7, wherein said sample is selected from the group consisting of stool, pus, and urine.

12. (New) The method of claim 7, further comprising the step of enriching said sample for human DNA.

13. (New) The method of claim 7, further comprising the step of isolating human DNA from said sample.

14. (New) The method of claim 9, wherein said sample comprises stool.